

The Napanee Express

EXTRA.

NAPANEE, AUGUST 18, 1888.

NAPANEE SENSATIONS

The Gossips have Two Sweet Morsels to Talk About.

Ungentlemanly Treatment of a Napanee Lady

*By the Hon. M. Bowell,
Min. of Customs.*

A Likely Breach of Promise Suit.

Seldom in the history of Napanee have the gossip-mongers had more "sweet morsels" to talk about than they have during the past two weeks. Dame Rumor has been fully alive and great have been the stories cast afloat. From the whole THE EXPRESS has been able to secure the full facts and give them to the public to-day.

The first was the unseemly conduct of two individuals who carry their heads high in society. The information regarding this case reached our reporter just a little before the forms for last issue were being closed. At once he betook himself to the fountain-head for particulars, but was rather late—the peacemaker, or justice miscarrier, had been ahead. Making known his mission the reply was given "Oh! they're all right." At once the reporter gave up the case for that day, as he had not time to "work it up" for the next day's issue. Taking it quietly since, he has gleaned the following: On Tuesday night, July 31st, the two men above referred to, whose names we need not give, as they are pretty well known by this time, who were somewhat the worse of liquor, followed a woman up John street with supposed evil intent. Reaching Anderson's livery stable, the woman entered and shortly afterwards came out again. She retraced her steps down John street and was followed. Returning once more to the livery stable house the men commenced a conversation with one of the colored women who reside in the premises. The conversation grew, the woman, as far as we have been able to learn, being finally insulted. Not being able to secure accurate information as to this point, THE EXPRESS has to draw conclusions. This is, however, readily done from what followed. The husband of the woman arose and gave the evil designers chase. The younger of the two, whose residence was not far distant, managed to escape, but the other was not so fortunate.

given her a trial trip with his family aboard. Fortunately Mrs. Stevenson was one of the friends of Holmes' family, which made matters much more easy to handle. A trip was arranged for—the party to be composed of Ministers Tupper and Bowell, Mr. Holmes' family and friends, and—"perhaps it would be well to invite the member and his wife." On the morning of July 2nd, the Cruiser set off for the sail up the bay, under pleasant auspices, with about fifteen aboard besides the crew. Those who watched her move off from the dock had not the slightest conjecture that the minister of customs had his eye on one of our ladies for a wife. Such was, however, the case. The boat ploughed through the waters nicely; dinner was served—first to the ministers and a number more; then the others sat down and in regular outing style the hon. gentlemen acted as waiters. Had Capt. Holmes not been compelled to stick to the wheel house so closely, he, with the knowledge he possessed, might have noticed the sly, longing glances that were now and again given by Mr. Bowell towards Mrs. Stevenson. Suspicions were not at all aroused and everything went as "merry as a marriage bell" the day through. After visiting the Murray canal the boat returned to Deseronto. Fortunately (!) it was too dark for Capt. Holmes, who had not steered up the river very often, to venture home that night with the Cruiser. Accordingly the company separated. The younger portion of the party betook themselves to a private assembly which was taking place in the village, while other members of the boat load took the mixed and midnight trains for the east. Mr. Bowell took a course of his own. He invited Mrs. Stevenson to a ride home in a carriage. This was accepted. During the drive over to Napanee he "popped the question." Mrs. Stevenson did not finally accept the proposition, asking several days to consider it. She, however, a couple of days later accepted and from that on they were engaged.

The date of the next meeting we cannot give, but it was not long after. Then Mr. Bowell wished the day for the wedding fixed. At first he was desirous of having the ceremony performed very quietly and at once. It was, however, fixed for August 15th.

Everything continued to move along nicely. The son of the hon. gentleman visited our town, spent considerable of his time with the friends of his father's intended wife; the engagement ring was presented; other presents were made; the wedding trousseau was being looked after and the wedding cake ordered. Mrs. Stevenson was complimented on all sides on the prospect of becoming the wife of him who stood so high in the political arena of Canada. But how true that there's "many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Joy has given place to sadness.

As in other instances "son-in-law Jamie-son" has brought Mackenzie Bowell into not too pleasant positions before the public, so it would seem to be the case in this. On the 3rd of August Jamie-son visited Napanee, and has, we understand, been on several other occasions in town. What his mission was no one at the time suspected, unless it was to make better acquaintance with those with whom he and his father-in-

nouncement of the marriage. When the engagement was at first announced it was denied, which was somewhat looked for. Still when the day was fixed, and all arrangements were being furthered, it was hardly expected that he would allow matters to go the length they have. In the Globe of the 13th appeared a telegram from Belleville, in which it was stated that he said he had paid some attention to Mr. Stevenson on his last visit here, "but the announcement of the wedding was made without my consent." The Mail of the same date said that "there was no truth whatever in the report that he will be married before leaving for the Pacific coast," and The Empire of the same day stated "that the report of the minister of customs' intended marriage is incorrect." This was not enough. On the 13th, two days before the date he himself fixed for the wedding, Mr. Bowell must inform the Ottawa correspondent of The Empire "that all the rumors which have been in circulation with regard to his proposed marriage are incorrect." Such conduct is shameful in the extreme. It looks as though the odd man was dotting, foolish, or that he had set a deliberate trap to ensnare and destroy the future prospects of a woman.

These would-be denials are made in the face of stubborn facts, such as the passing of the engagement ring; the inviting, by himself, of his friends, and the acceptance by one of them up to Thursday; and the engaging of the Archdeacon to marry him. On one of his recent visits (the beginning of last week, when Mr. James Herring had an evening party, at which C. J. Bowell was a guest, while his father paid his attentions to his intended next door) Mr. John Stevenson tendered the old gentleman an invitation to make his home his stopping place on the Tuesday evening previous and up to the hour of the wedding on Wednesday. This was accepted in the presence of some friends of the Stevenson families. On Saturday morning, with the mail conveying the letter to Mrs. Stevenson breaking up the wedding, came another epistle to Mr. John Stevenson thanking him for his kind offer, but declining it "for reasons which Mrs. E. Stevenson could give if she chose," and with the same mail was a third letter, canceling the services of the Archdeacon. In the face of these facts it is cruel for a man to endeavor to throw all the blame on a woman.

Since the above was in type we notice the following in the Ottawa Free Press of the 15th: "Hon. Mr. Bowell, in conversation with a Free Press reporter to-day, gave the statement of his alleged engagement a denial." In reply, and to further substantiate what we have before said, we would just say that Mr. Bowell personally wrote Archdeacon Bedford-Jones, asking him to officiate at the marriage of himself and Mrs. Stevenson, to which the clergyman replied, saying that he would be happy to do so and complimenting him upon his good fortune. Then, in addition, Mr. Bowell, when joked about the affair by various persons in town, did not deny that it was to take place. The wedding attire was being made by Messrs. Robinson & Co. and Hooper & Doozee and the order for the cake was given to Mr. W. H. Davis.

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Mr. Bowell's Love Affair.

The above case had just been nicely secured by the gossip-mongers, when a rumor was set afloat that Hon. M. Bowell was to be married on the 15th to Mrs. E. S. D. Stevenson, of this place. This was cause for comment in fair circles particularly, until Saturday last, when it became known that the engagement was broken off, even more abruptly than it was made. Then all sorts of rumors were started.

The history of this case commences with the laying of the corner stone of our new post office. It will be remembered that this took place on Thursday, June 21st, the officiating gentlemen being the Hons. H. Langevin and M. Bowell. After the stone had been laid and speeches made, mayor Cook took the ministers in hand. During the afternoon they were, with some of the Drs friends, driven round town. Among the latter was Mrs. E. S. D. Stevenson, who was introduced by the mayor to the honorable gentleman. As he afterwards said Mr Bowell was at once struck with the pleasing manner and gracefulness of the accomplished widow, and, as he also afterwards said, determined if he could win her to have her for his wife.

The good looking widower of sixty four summers immediately set to work and "played his cards" well up to Thursday last. Capt Holmes of this place had been appointed fishery overseer for northern waters and was placed in charge of the yacht Cruiser which the government had recently purchased from Mr. Gilmour. The boat was still at Kingston, the Captain not having as yet

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All continued well up to Thursday night, when Mr. Bowell paid a visit to Napanee, having received a letter from his daughter in which was the question, "why go to Napanee for a wife, where all the women are bad" or "fast"—something to that effect if not just those words. The father was met at the station by his son C. J., and together they visited the Huffman House, read the letter over, and the son decided that the father should go on and pay no attention to the epistle—do just as though it had not been received. Mr. Bowell visited his intended and showed her the letter, and it was talked over, but nothing of moment transpired. The two parted the best of friends, Mrs. Stevenson fully expecting all was still well. Mr. Bowell was to go to Belleville, consult with his family, and return the next day.

Bowell did not return the next day, and Mrs. Stevenson's surprise can be better imagined than described when we state that on Saturday morning she received a letter from Mr. Bowell to the effect that the marriage must be declared off, as there were rumors afloat regarding Mrs. Stevenson which, whether true or untrue, were sufficient to break up the engagement. No opportunity was given Mrs. Stevenson to explain; she was cut off abruptly. The hitherto over-heated love of the minister of the crown had become cooled, whether willingly or unwillingly it is hard to say. He had gone to the home of his children in Belleville, and on Friday had evidently put in a hard day's work with his friends—the latter coming out best in the struggle.

This was naturally very serious news for Mrs. Stevenson. It prostrated her, and on Saturday she took to her bed, where she was confined up to well on in the day of Monday. Even at this writing we understand she is not at all well, and it is difficult to say just what effect the unbecoming action of Bowell will have upon her.

It is quite evident that had it not been for the interference of outsiders, to-day Mr Bowell and Mrs Stevenson would have been man and wife.

In brief, the history of the affair up to this time was thus: Love at first sight; proposition at second meeting; on the third meeting fixing of the day; with a very abrupt breaking off of the engagement inside a few weeks.

But this is not all. As though to add insult to injury, Mr. Bowell has since kept his mouth closed, and allowed damaging reports to be given currency as to the an-

and other, but declining it "for reasons which Mrs. E. Stevenson could give if she chose," and with the same mail was a third letter, canceling the services of the Archdeacon. In the face of these facts it is cruel for a man to endeavor to throw all the blame on a woman.

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When the Archdeacon received the letter from Mr. Bowell on Saturday notifying him that his services would not be required he was much taken aback and wrote Mr. Bowell an indignant letter.

Bowell has acted very childish throughout this affair. He was love stricken at first sight, and has broken off the marriage in schoolboy fashion. It would appear as though his word in social matters was no more to be relied upon than it is in political. Had he acted more manly, a woman would have been saved ridicule, and the homes of families undisturbed.

Just what action may be taken in the premises we are not in a position to say. Mrs. Stevenson feels her position very keenly, but being of a weak, nervous temperament, is not inclined to go into court. Her friends, however, say that such must be done—that Bowell must be made to smart severely for his shameful conduct. It is hoped in the interest of womanhood such will be the case. He may go away on his British Columbia trip with the idea that the affair will all blow over before his return, but upon his arrival in Ontario again he may find it different.

Who is Mrs. Stevenson?

To residents of this section it is hardly necessary to reply to this query, but to outsiders it may be. She is a widow of forty summers, accomplished and pleasing in her manner. She was born at Bath, and in 1869 married Mr. E. S. D. Stevenson, third son of the late Hon. Jno. Stevenson, well and favorably known to the older residents in these counties. Mr. Ed. Stevenson will be known to the older members of the Commons and Senate when we state that for some time he was private secretary to his father in the Legislative Assembly. He was a graduate of Toronto University and had a brilliant career before him. Death, however, cut him off just as he was about entering life in real earnest. As the issue of the marriage there is a son about 17 years old, who resides with his mother on Bridge street. Dame Rumor has been very cruel with Mrs. Stevenson since the breaking up of the marriage. One of the most cruel thrusts is that the affair was of her own seeking, and that it was Bowell's money she was after. This is untrue. Since the death of her husband Mrs. Stevenson has resided in her own house in this place, her mother living with her. Of means she has ample to keep her. She has an interest in the Stevenson estate, which includes the property here and the piano works at Kingston. Comfortable and happy, and moving in good society in Napanee, she had no occasion to seek a change in life.